



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS, LICENSES AND PERMITS

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MEMORANDUM

MEMO TO: Hearing Examiner for Howard County

THROUGH: Robert Frances, P.E., Director
Department of Inspections, Licenses & Permits

TO: Sean Kelly, Division Chief
Inspections and Enforcement Division

FROM: Ed Marquardt, Sign Code Inspector
Inspections and Enforcement Division

DATE: November 26, 2014

SUBJECT: Sign Variance Petition BA 14-005S
Petitioner: Triangle Sign & Service
Sign Permit Application: S14000309
Sign location: 9416 Baltimore National Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21042

Request Description:

The petitioner is requesting a variance of the Howard County Sign Code proposing to erect a commercial, freestanding, pylon identification sign. This proposed pylon identification sign is faced on two sides with five aluminum panels.

The largest panel, the top portion of the sign reads: First National Bank with their corporate logo. This sign panel starts at 12 ft. /9 in., from finished grade, and has a height of 5ft. /1 in., for a combined height of 20 ft. /8 in., from finished grade to top of sign. This panel, with a height of 5ft. /1 in., and width of 4ft. /7 in., has a total of 23.30 sq. ft. of signage.

Below the top panel is the lower sign panel, which reads: ATM. This panel starts at the height of 11ft. /4 in., from finished grade, and has a height of 0 ft. /11 in., for a combined height of 12 ft. /3 in., from finished grade to top of sign. This sign panel, with a height of 0 ft. /11 in., and width of 1ft. /6 in., has a total of 1.38 sq. ft. of signage.

This pylon sign has a total height of, 20ft. /8 in., from finished grade to top of sign. There is a total of 24.68 sq. ft. of signage, for each of the two faces. The pylon sign is 2 ft. /6 in. thick, and the two sides with the sign panels have a width of 6ft. /0 in. each.

Findings of Fact:

This technical evaluation from the perspective of the Howard County Sign Code is based upon the site plan submitted with the variance petition by Sill, Adcock & Associates LLC August 22, 2014. This plan depicts the current configuration of 9416 Baltimore National Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21042. It shows the location of the existing and proposed sign, the location of the First National Bank building, parking lot and the proposed sign and the property's existing site topography grade.

The proposed signs described within the variance petition, would be in violation of the following sections of the Howard County Sign Code, To Wit:

Section 3.501(c) (2) (c) Sign standards by district

Commercial Districts, Commercial Areas, all Areas within Downtown Columbia, Industrial Districts and Industrial Areas

Freestanding signs:

The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply in Downtown Columbia. Where a building does not cover the full area of the property, business signs may be freestanding or ground-supported and may be located in the front yard. The height of the sign may not exceed one foot for each two feet the sign is set back from the right-of-way and shall not exceed 26 feet from the grade level to the top of the sign.

Freestanding signs shall be permitted only where there is a minimum of 40 lineal feet of lot frontage.

The maximum allowable area for a freestanding sign shall be one square foot for each one foot the sign is set back from the road right-of-way. The largest single face of a freestanding sign shall be considered for the purpose of computing allowable area under this section. No part of the sign shall extend beyond a property line or right-of-way line.

The proposed sign is to be located only 14 ft. from the Baltimore National Pike right-of-way. At this 14 ft. right-of-way location, the sign code would allow for a sign height of only 7 ft. /0 in. and 14.0 sq. ft. of signage. The proposed sign has a height of 20 ft. /8 in. above finished grade, making it 13ft. /8 in. higher than the height the sign code would allow. For the proposed sign there is a total of 24.68 sq. ft. of signage, making it 10.68 sq. ft. more than the code allows at the proposed location.

Variance Requirement Questions:

Are there unique physical conditions or exceptional topographical conditions peculiar to the property on which the proposed sign is to be located, including the location of existing buildings and other structures, irregularity, narrowness or shallowness of the lot, irregularity of the road right-of-way, location on a highway that has a dependency on nonlocal use?

No. They could move the proposed sign to the opposite side of the entrance and place it back 30 ft. plus from the road right-of-way. This location would allow for more than a 15 ft. tall sign and 30 plus sq. ft. of signage.

Are there obstructions, such as excessive grade, building interference, structures or landscaping on abutting property or properties which seriously interfere with the visibility of a proposed sign?

No. They could move the proposed sign to the opposite side of the entrance and place it back 30 ft. plus from the road right-of-way. When traveling along Baltimore National Pike (Rt. 40), the sign would not be obstructed by the closest building which is the 7-Eleven.

Are there are historical, architectural or aesthetic characteristics which shall be considered?

No. Please see the attached Internal Memorandum from the Department of Planning and Zoning dated 10/9/14.

If the variance is granted, will it adversely affect the appropriate use or development of adjacent properties, or result in a dangerous traffic condition?

No. Please see the attached Internal Memorandum from the Department of Planning and Zoning dated 10/9/14.

Is the requested Variance the minimum necessary to afford relief, and can it be granted without substantial impairment of the intent, purpose and integrity of the code?

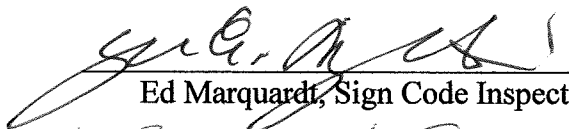
No. They could move the proposed sign to the opposite side of the entrance and place it back 30 ft. plus from the road right-of-way. This location would allow for more than a 15 ft. tall sign and 30 plus sq. ft. of signage.

Were the practical difficulties or hardships created by the Applicant?

No.

The hearing date for this case has been scheduled for: December 15, 2014 at 9:30 a.m.

Report Prepared by:


Ed Marquardt, Sign Code Inspector

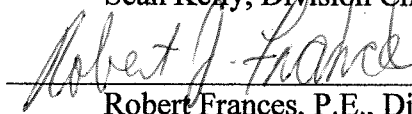
Report Reviewed by:


Brenda Saucedo, Supervising Sign Code Inspector

Report Reviewed by:


Sean Kelly, Division Chief

Report Approved by:


Robert Frances, P.E., Director
Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Case No. BA 14-005s Sign Variance Petitions

To: Ed Marquardt, Jr., Code Enforcement Officer, DILP

From: Brad Killian, Planning Supervisor, DPZ/DCCP

Date: October 9, 2014

I have reviewed the Sign Variance Petition BA 14-005s submitted on behalf of First National Bank located at 9416 Baltimore National Pike.

The proposed sign is not out of character for the corridor or property location; I have no comments at this time.

If you have questions, please contact me at ext. 4364.

cc: Bill Mackey, Chief, Division of Comprehensive and Community Planning